

# A Guide for Community/Organization Leaders:

## Re-establishing Safety within a Community

When a child goes missing, the community can be impacted in a range of ways. It is necessary to have a response plan that considers the diverse support needs of all individuals within the community.

### What do community/organization leaders need to do?

It is important for community/organization leaders to be role models for community members/staff in the organization. They can do this by:

- Validating the feelings experienced when a community member is missing.
- Displaying compassion and support.
- Displaying evidence of self-care, such as sharing with staff and community members what they are doing to help cope with the experience (e.g., talking to a professional to help them process the situation, getting regular exercise and sleep) and encourage others to do the same so they can take care of themselves.
- Accessing community services to help organize and lead support groups within the community for staff and parents.

### What do children and families need?

There are two types of children and families to consider:

1. Direct victims — these children and their families will need access to professional services/counselling.
2. Children who don't really know/understand what is going on — these children have likely heard rumours about what has happened. This can be scary and cause stress for some kids. Based on what they have heard, children may be afraid someone will try to hurt them or someone close to them. Some children who have trauma histories may need to work through their processing with a trained therapist.

### What can the community/organizations do?

- Provide a handout to parents (see *Restoring Community Connections* handout, available at [missingkids.ca/resources](https://missingkids.ca/resources)).
- Invite parents to a community evening (support group) to help them process their own feelings so they can model healthy behaviour and help their child move forward.
- Use developmentally appropriate material to teach children about personal safety (see [kidsintheknow.ca](https://kidsintheknow.ca))
- Consult with experts in trauma to learn how to engage with staff and families through trauma informed practice.

Alternate formats may be available upon request.

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